Annual Report

2002–2003

the Education Quality and Accountability Office

The Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) is an arm's-length agency of the Ontario government with the following legislated objects:

1. To evaluate the quality and effectiveness of elementary and secondary school education.
2. To develop tests and require or undertake the administering and marking of tests of pupils in elementary and secondary schools.
3. To develop systems for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of elementary and secondary school education.
4. To research and collect information on assessing academic achievement.
5. To evaluate the public accountability of boards and to collect information on strategies for improving that accountability.
6. To report to the public and to the Minister of Education and Training on the results of tests and generally on the quality and effectiveness of elementary and secondary school education and on the public accountability of boards.
7. To make recommendations, in its reports to the public and to the Minister of Education and Training, on any matter related to the quality or effectiveness of elementary and secondary school education or to the public accountability of boards.

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Education
Quality and
Accountability
Office

Annual Report

2002–2003

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Honourable Elizabeth Witmer
Deputy Premier and Minister of Education
900 Bay Street, Mowat Block
22nd Floor
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

Jerry G. Ponikvar
Chair

Marguerite Jackson
Chief Executive Officer

Dear Minister:

The Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) is pleased to present its seventh annual report.

The *Annual Report, 2002–2003* provides information on EQAO's activities and major accomplishments during 2002–2003.

EQAO's mandate is to ensure greater accountability and contribute to the enhancement of the quality of education in Ontario. EQAO fulfills its mandate by gathering student achievement information through a program of assessments and by reporting this information to the Minister, educators and the public, along with recommendations for system improvement. We are confident that you will find EQAO's activities for the 2002–2003 fiscal year to be in keeping with the Office's commitment to public accountability.

Since its inception, EQAO has been providing schools and school boards with achievement information measured against curriculum expectations to assist them in demonstrating accountability and in planning for the improvement of student achievement. Improvement planning increases a school or school board's capacity to design and manage change that will improve student outcomes. By providing student achievement information and giving feedback on school board improvement plans, EQAO makes an important contribution to this process. This contribution is proving successful: Ontario students achieved levels significantly higher than in past years on the latest national and international assessments, which places them among the best in the country and in the world.

We salute the members of Ontario's education community, who continue to work in partnership with EQAO to improve student learning and to ensure that students are meeting curriculum expectations. We also thank the members of the board, the EQAO staff and the members of EQAO's Assessment Advisory Committee for their contributions, which enable EQAO to deliver its mandate effectively.

Jerry G. Ponikvar
Chair, Board of Directors

Marguerite Jackson
Chief Executive Officer

EQAO's Board of Directors

Jerry G. Ponikvar
Chair

Bette M. Stephenson
Vice-Chair

Members

Martin Cugelman

Nancy A. Elgie

Dominic Giroux

John Martel

Beverley J. Oda

Krystyna Rudko

Doretta Wilson

Mandate

EQAO will ensure greater accountability and contribute to the enhancement of the quality of education in Ontario. This will be done through student assessments and reviews based on objective, reliable and relevant information, and the timely public release of this information along with recommendations for system improvement.

In addition to its mandate, the following values guide EQAO in all of its decisions and activities.

1. *EQAO values student learning above all other interests.*

2. *EQAO values information that has the potential to bring about constructive change and improvement.*

3. *EQAO values the dedication and expertise of Ontario's educators and works in partnership with them in all of its activities.*

4. *EQAO values the delivery of its programs and services with equivalent quality in both English and French.*

Fulfilling Our Mandate—2002–2003 Achievements

1. Assessments

Provincial Student Assessments

EQAO conducts the following province-wide assessments: the Grade 3 and Grade 6 Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics and the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT).

The Grade 3 and Grade 6 Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics

The Grade 3 and Grade 6 Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics measure how well students have met the provincial expectations in *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8*. Each assessment covers the knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics that students are expected to have acquired by the end of the grade being assessed.

During the 2002–2003 fiscal year, the Grade 3 and Grade 6 Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics were administered over a five-day period between May 9 and May 23, 2002.

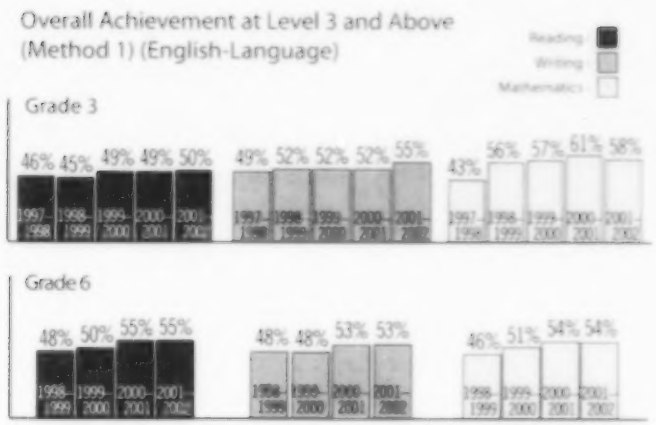
- Approximately 140 000 English-language students and 7000 French-language students participated in the fifth annual administration of the Grade 3 assessment.
- Approximately 145 000 English-language students and 6700 French-language students participated in the fourth annual administration of the Grade 6 assessment.

EQAO's responsibilities include designing and implementing a comprehensive program of student **assessment** within government-established parameters; **reporting** information pertaining to student achievement to the Ministry, the education community and the public for accountability purposes; and making recommendations for **system improvement.**

The 2001–2002 Grade 3 and Grade 6 Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics were marked during the summer (July 2002) by approximately 2200 markers. Parents received their children's Individual Student Reports (ISRs) in November 2002.

Data Comparison over Time

The Grade 3 and Grade 6 assessments are administered every May. The Grade 3 assessment was administered for the first time during the 1996–1997 school year. The Grade 6 assessment was administered for the first time during the 1998–1999 school year.



The Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics

The Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics covers the mathematics knowledge and skills that students are expected to have acquired by the end of Grade 9. There are two versions of the assessment, to accommodate students who are in the applied and academic streams. There are two administrations of the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics per school year. Students enrolled in first-semester mathematics programs write the assessment in January. Students enrolled in second-semester and full-year mathematics programs write the assessment in May/June.

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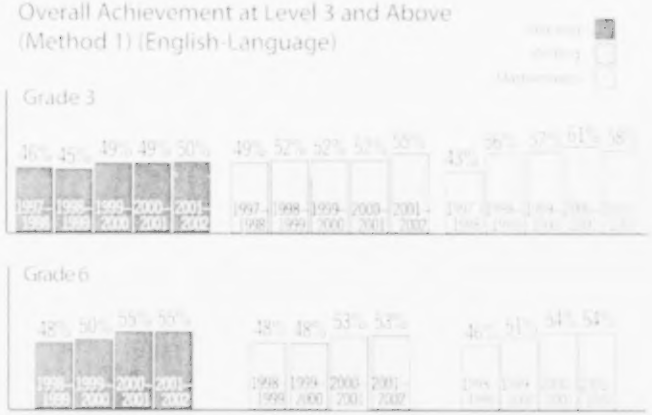
Overall Achievement at Level 3 and Above
(Method 1) (English-Language)



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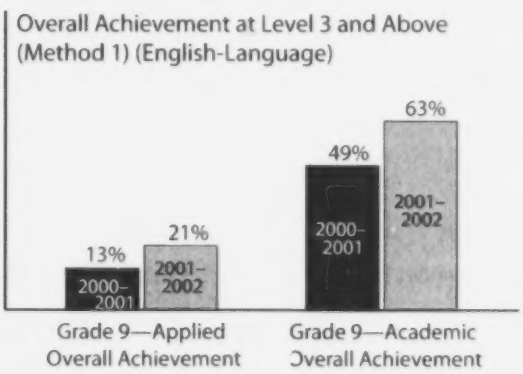
The Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics was administered twice during the fiscal year: once in May/June 2002 and the second time in January 2003.

- Approximately 84 500 English-language students participated in the May/June 2002 administration.
- Approximately 2900 French-language students participated in the May/June 2002 administration.
- Approximately 65 000 English-language students participated in the January 2003 administration.
- Approximately 2600 French-language students participated in the January 2003 administration.
- The May/June 2002 Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics was marked in July 2002.
- The January 2003 assessment will be marked in July 2003.

Data Comparison over Time

The Grade 9 assessment is administered twice during the school year: once in winter for first-semester students and once in spring for second-semester and full-year students. The Grade 9 assessment was administered for the first time during the 2000–2001 school year.



Method 1 reporting includes students in the **exempt** and **no data** categories.

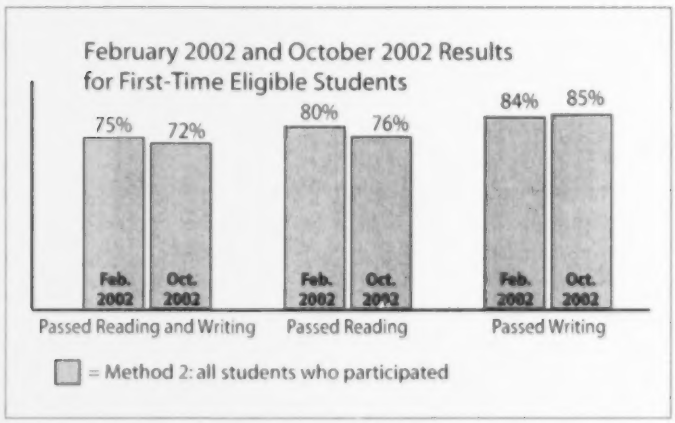
The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test

The OSSLT is designed to assess the reading and writing skills students are expected to have acquired across all subjects by the end of Grade 9 as outlined in *The Ontario Curriculum*. Successful completion of the OSSLT or the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC)[1] is one of the 32 requirements for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

On October 23 and October 24, 2002, the OSSLT was administered for the second time to students across the province.

- Approximately 136 000 first-time eligible (entered Grade 9 in 2001) and approximately 33 000 previously eligible (entered Grade 9 in 2000) English-language students participated fully in the October 2002 OSSLT.
- Approximately 5000 first-time eligible (entered Grade 9 in 2001) and approximately 1600 previously eligible (entered Grade 9 in 2000) French-language students participated fully in the October 2002 OSSLT.

The October 2002 OSSLT was marked in November and December 2002 by approximately 3000 markers. Students who wrote the October 2002 OSSLT received their ISRs in April 2003.



[1] Effective September 2003, students who have been eligible to write the OSSLT at least twice and who have attempted it unsuccessfully at least once are eligible to fulfill the requirement through the OSSLC.

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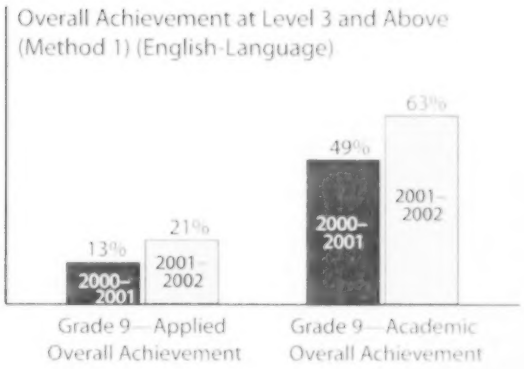

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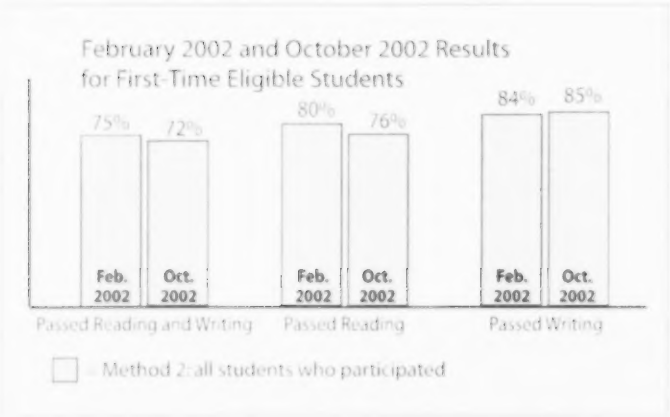

[1] Effective September 2003, students who have been eligible to write the OSSLT at least twice and who have attempted it unsuccessfully at least once are eligible to fulfill the requirement through the OSSLC.

National and International Assessments

EQAO is responsible for managing Ontario's participation in national and international assessments.

Achievement results obtained on national assessments provide information that can be used to supplement board and provincial assessment data. This information can assist in setting education priorities and in improvement planning. It also serves to assess Ontario students' skills against national and international benchmarks.

Ontario's 13- and 16-year-old English-language students matched the Canadian average for both the content and the problem-solving components of the 2001 SAIP mathematics assessment; the province's 13-year old French-language students matched the Canadian average in problem solving. In general, Ontario students performed better in SAIP mathematics in 2001 than they did in 1997.

In April and May 2002, the School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) Writing III Assessment was administered to a random sample of Canadian students. Ontario was part of the consortium that designed and administered the assessment, which had students demonstrate their knowledge and writing skills by completing an assigned writing task. In Ontario, approximately 2000 English-language students from 200 schools and 1800 French-language students from 160 schools participated in the assessment. The report on Ontario's results from this administration was released by EQAO in the spring of 2003.

Achievement results obtained on national assessments provide information that can be used to supplement board and provincial assessment data. This information can assist in setting education priorities and in improvement planning.

2. Reporting

Throughout the year, EQAO released several reports on student achievement to schools, school boards and the public.

Individual Student Reports

Each student who takes part in an EQAO assessment receives an ISR. The ISR provides details to confirm a child's progress, and, as required, can be a tool for parents, teachers and principals to identify areas in which improvement is needed.

"EQAO achievement results give me a sense of how well my children and their school are doing relative to provincial expectations."

—Steven Langer, parent

"The purpose of school councils is, through the active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. School improvement planning is a natural fit for school councils. EQAO assessment results are a good starting point for school councils and parents to discuss school improvement plans with their school, as they strive for continuous improvement."

—Trudy Griffiths, Chair and parent member of the Ontario Parent Council

The following are examples of strategies that were implemented by schools and schools boards across the province to improve student learning:

- a cross-curricular approach that stresses the consistent development of language skills across curriculum areas
- communication with parents to enhance children's learning at home
- a review of EQAO's Individual Student Report for each student and the development of a plan of action
- the identification of additional resources to support mathematics programs
- literacy enrichment classes

School and Board Reports

Each school and school board received a report summarizing student performance at the board and school levels. Schools and boards use this information to report to their communities and for improvement planning.

School and board reports are made available to the public through the EQAO Web site: www.eqao.com.

The Provincial Report

In January 2003, EQAO released its sixth annual *Ontario Provincial Report on Achievement*, which brings together results and recommendations from the provincial, national and international assessments that took place during 2001–2002. The report also highlights provincial trends and identifies areas that require action.

3. System Improvement

EQAO works to ensure that the information pertaining to student achievement is used to bring about improvement for individual students and for the education system as a whole. School boards use EQAO achievement results to plan improvement at the school and board levels. Each year, school boards are required to develop and submit improvement plans to EQAO: all 60 English-language and all 12 French-language school boards submitted their improvement plans to EQAO during the 2002–2003 fiscal year. The plans document the changes boards will make to promote improved student achievement. EQAO provides boards with feedback on their plans and makes recommendations for system-wide improvement.

Providing Teachers and Students with Resources to Improve Literacy Skills

The *Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud*

The *Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud* has developed resource materials to help with remediation in literacy. The materials allow teachers of all subjects to participate in the remediation process.

The resource materials provide information and tips to help students acquire the reading and writing skills they are expected to have learned by the end of Grade 9. The activities include reading informational and literary texts and writing news reports, information paragraphs, summaries and opinion pieces.

As a result of such initiatives, the *Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud* has seen a significant improvement in its students' OSSLT results.

A School's Initiative to Improve Students' Achievement in Reading and Writing

Centennial Public School

The principal of Centennial Public School in Cambridge noticed that, overall, boys were obtaining lower scores than girls in reading on EQAO tests. To remedy this, the school reviewed its teaching practices.

Centennial has undertaken initiatives such as the use of a systematic and structured traditional phonics method of teaching reading, and more time has been spent on reading in the classroom. Teachers also provided opportunities for students to do Brain Gym, a program of gentle physical activities that are thought to help improve concentration and lengthen attention span. The school has since seen improvement in Grade 3 reading scores overall, and there has been a significant increase in the percentage of boys who are meeting the provincial standard.

Centennial's success demonstrates that provincial assessment data help to improve student learning.

Striving for Excellence

As EQAO continues its work, ongoing consultation will help it continue meeting the needs of stakeholders and achieving the shared goal of improved student learning.

EQAO Continues to Meet Stakeholder Needs Through Its Outreach Activities

During the 2002–2003 fiscal year, EQAO met with stakeholders from across the province to gather their thoughts, concerns and suggestions. For instance, we asked educators about their experiences administering the OSSLT. Many expressed concern about the time required for preparation. We listened and have taken action to simplify the upcoming test administration. As EQAO continues its work, ongoing consultation will help it continue meeting the needs of stakeholders and achieving the shared goal of improved student learning.

EQAO Improves Processes Through New Technologies

In keeping with its commitment to high standards and excellence in the delivery of its assessment program, EQAO has implemented new technologies to facilitate processes such as the reporting of results. EQAO now provides individual student results in electronic format to schools and school boards, making it easier for them to analyze the data for improvement planning and target-setting.

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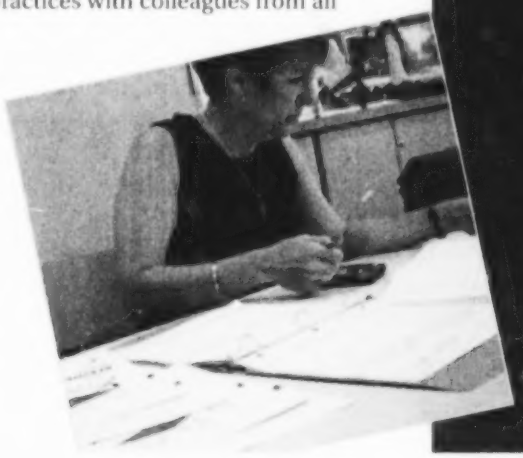
EQAO Salutes the Commitment of the Education Community

Successful student assessments depend on educators at every stage of the process. Teachers and administrators from across the province participate in developing, pilot and field testing, validating, administering, and scoring assessment materials and selecting anchors. Since 2001, approximately 18 000 markers have been involved in our assessment activities.

Prior to the Administration:

Teacher Participation in Test-Item Development and Pilot and Field Testing

Many educators across Ontario are involved in developing, pilot testing and field testing EQAO assessment items. Their involvement ensures that assessment items are fair, appropriate and free of bias. It also provides them with excellent professional development in curriculum and assessment and allows them to share assessment strategies and practices with colleagues from all across the province.



Quotes from Teachers

"Anchor selection was a great learning experience … and opened my eyes to the specific areas schools and teachers need to focus on to help students improve."

"The knowledge I have gained here will greatly benefit my teaching. This experience allows me to provide strategies to my students, so that they may succeed."

"Through this evaluation experience, I gain a deeper understanding of Ministry expectations and I transfer these expectations to my classroom. I encourage pupils to explain their responses in full detail and to provide pictures, numbers and words as laid out in Ministry guidelines."

During the Administration:

Participation of School Boards, School Personnel and Students in the Assessments

Schools are responsible for administering EQAO's assessments.

- Approximately 3500 English-language and approximately 280 French-language elementary schools were involved in the 2002 administration of the Grade 3 and Grade 6 Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics.
- Approximately 690 English-language and approximately 70 French-language secondary schools were involved in the administration of the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics in May/June 2002 and January 2003.
- Approximately 720 English-language and approximately 80 French-language secondary schools were involved in the administration of the OSSLT in October 2002.

After the Administration:

Teacher Participation in Anchor Selection and Marking Activities

EQAO relies on teachers' participation in the marking of its assessments. Each year, educators from across Ontario are involved in anchor selection and marking.

- Anchor selection precedes the scoring of assessments. It is the process through which scoring guidelines or rubrics are set.
- The scoring of student work follows anchor selection. Thousands of educators are involved in this process. During the 2002–2003 fiscal year, approximately 2200 educators marked the Grade 3 and Grade 6 Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics.

Anchor selectors and markers regarded the experience as "rewarding," "excellent," "very positive" and "very valuable."

EQAO would like to thank the education community for its commitment to Ontario students and for all of its hard work.

Deloitte & Touche

Financial Statements of

Education Quality and Accountability Office

March 31, 2003

Auditors' Report

To Board of Directors of the Education Quality and Accountability Office

We have audited the balance sheet of the Education Quality and Accountability Office as at March 31, 2003 and the statement of revenue and expenditure for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the organization's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

In our opinion, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Office as at March 31, 2003 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the basis of accounting as disclosed in Note 2 to the financial statements.

Deloitte & Touche LLP

Chartered Accountants
May 30, 2003

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Balance Sheet

March 31, 2003

	2003	2002 (Restated - Note 3)
ASSETS		
Cash	**$ 5,042,006**	$ 8,499,084
Accounts receivable	**3,505,377**	233,387
	$ 8,547,383	$ 8,732,471
LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	**$ 7,966,247**	$ 13,311,871
EQUITY		
Surplus (Note 3)	**581,136**	(4,579,400)
	$ 8,547,383	$ 8,732,471

Statement of Revenue and Expenditure

Year Ended March 31, 2003

	2003	2002 (Restated - Note 3)
REVENUE		
Ministry of Education		
Base allocation	**$ 47,550,000**	$ 46,550,000
One-time allocations	**7,750,851**	7,568,423
Other	**511,605**	1,536,441
	55,812,455	55,654,864
EXPENDITURE		
Salary, wages and benefits	**9,850,089**	10,460,114
Transportation and communications	**5,322,283**	4,818,192
Service and rental	**34,548,050**	43,725,231
Supplies and equipment	**931,498**	1,275,733
	50,651,920	60,279,270
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURE	**5,160,536**	(4,624,406)
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS (DEFICIT), BEGINNING OF YEAR	**(4,579,400)**	45,006
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS (DEFICIT), END OF YEAR	**$ 581,136**	$ (4,579,400)

Notes to the Financial Statements

March 31, 2003

1. Description of Office

The Education Quality and Accountability Office was established by the Province of Ontario by the *"EQAO Act"*, June 1996. It was created to ensure greater accountability and contribute to the enhancement of the quality of education in Ontario. This is done through assessments and reviews based on objective, reliable and relevant information, and the timely public release of that information along with recommendations for system improvement.

2. Accounting Policies

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles for public sector entities except for the following significant accounting policy.

Capital assets

Capital assets are expensed in the year of acquisition. As most assets are leased, capital assets expensed are minor.

3. Prior Period Adjustment

Effective for the year ending March 31, 2003, the Office adopted the accrual method of accounting as in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles for public sector entities as directed by the Ministry of Education.

Prior to the adoption of the accrual method, the financial statements were prepared with the basis of accounting that was common practice of the Government of Ontario, which included recording revenue and expenses on a cash basis with the exception of payroll expenses.

As a result of this change in accounting policy, certain expenses which were paid in fiscal 2003 but related to activities of the 2002 program, were added to the 2002 accounts payable and expense accounts. Accordingly, expenses in the 2002 year increased by $4,624,406 and surplus at the end of the year decreased by the same amount.

Also during the year, the Office was reassessed employment taxes on certain contracted staff. For the fiscal years ended March 2000 and 2001, the total assessment was $1,604,450 and was completely funded. Accordingly, no adjustment has been made to the prior year surplus.

4. Statement of Cash Flow

A statement of cash flow has not been presented as it would not provide any additional useful information.

5. Lease Commitments

The minimum annual lease payments related to the office lease and office equipment for the next two years are as follows:

2004	$75445
2005	$26413

6. Comparative Financial Statements

Certain of the comparative figures have been reclassified to conform with the current year's presentation.